



The Boston Newspaper Guild

TNG-CWA Local 31245

June 3, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

Each Boston Newspaper Guild member faces an intensely personal decision when you vote June 8 on the contract offer before us. The future of The Boston Globe – and what kind of place it will become - is at stake. So too are the futures of the many families who depend on The Globe, and the trajectory of careers built in dedication to the pursuit of truth.

I have every confidence that whatever Guild members decide will be the correct path.

Nonetheless, you learn a lot about people and organizations from how they behave in a highly challenging situation. And what we have learned about New York Times Company management – and its unwillingness to share the pain of overcoming this crisis – is terribly disappointing.

Guild members haven't seen a pay raise in four years. And they are well prepared to take a pay cut to help preserve The Globe and its mission. Management, on the other hand, received healthy bonus payments in February 2009 – just weeks before New York threatened to shut down The Globe.

Indeed, while this entire process began with one threat, The Times Company now hopes to finish things with another – the prospect of an immediate 23-percent pay cut.

The company's best offer to Guild members effectively cuts pay 10.3 percent forever. Management, however, will endure a 5 percent pay cut only through December 31. Guild members have been preparing for significant pension and retirement plan cuts, including an end to any 401k match. Unbelievably, The Times Company has actually boosted the matching contribution for management 401k plans by 66 percent.

Make no mistake, in an industry under tremendous financial pressure, there are good examples being set elsewhere – including right in The Boston Globe's backyard. At Gatehouse Media New England, which owns 100 community newspapers in Massachusetts, senior managers will shoulder the largest pay cuts (up to 15 percent) as the company tries to save \$2.5 million.

And Phoenix Media/Communications, which owns WFNX in Boston and publishes The Boston Phoenix and other publications, also reserved the biggest hits for top management in a recent round of cost-cutting.

That's one way to cope with such a challenge – sharing the pain and being a true partner with workers. It's just not The Times Company's way.

Instead, they have created fear among the rank and file, and displayed favor for the special interests of management.

The Times Company has obtained concessions in large part through its willingness to bully Globe workers. Not long after the 130-member Pressmen's Union approved a Times Company offer last week, union president Martin Callaghan told reporters that his members "felt Globe management was holding a big gun and were prepared to use it."

As Guild members, all we have done is to do our jobs: producing some of the best journalism in the country; reliably delivering the news on several platforms to hundreds of thousands of Globe and Boston.com readers; and servicing loyal advertisers who rely on The Globe to make their business work.

We didn't create this problem. An evolving business model due to shifts in behavior by readers and advertisers – and accelerated by this terrible economy – has placed the newspaper business in restart mode.

And quite frankly, Times Company management decisions have been wretched: another unfortunate reality of their response to a serious challenge.

In New York, there was an ill-timed stock buyback that forever damaged the net worth of The Times Company's controlling Ochs-Sulzberger clan. Then The Times Company got stuck in a debt trap after splurging on a new headquarters building. The Times sold its old building for \$175 million. It later sold for three times that amount.

In Boston, The Globe last year brought in a consulting firm to help reshape its ad business. An entire new sales unit was created, and then laid off or otherwise eliminated within a year. In March of this year, The Globe laid off more than half the staff of its inside advertising sales group. Today they are pouring big money into overtime costs because that group is so shorthanded.

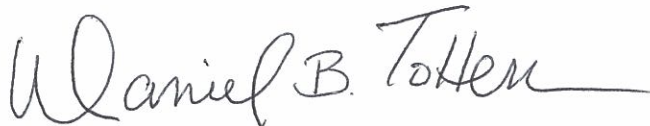
Again, we didn't create this problem. But The Boston Newspaper Guild has been here to help solve it from day one.

Unfortunately, partnership with its workers isn't part of The New York Times Company way. At least not in Boston.

Threats, bullying and negotiating at gunpoint – that's what we've learned from The Times Company.

It's quite a lesson to be giving when the whole world is watching.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel B. Totten". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel B. Totten
President
Boston Newspaper Guild
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